

Vehicular Collisions with Animals

What you need to know

Animal-vehicle collisions are not only costly but can be dangerous. From 2001 to 2011, animal collisions contributed to more than 2,080 fatal crashes nationwide. There were 211 deaths from collisions with animals in 2017, these deaths occurred most often during July-September. Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 one out of every 116 drivers had an insurance claim from hitting an animal. Whether a deer, dog, moose or squirrel, animals on the roadway are unexpected, and their actions can be erratic and unpredictable, creating a dangerous situation for motorists. Most wildlife-vehicle collisions occur during the fall and winter, and many are preventable.

What to do if an Animal Runs in Front of Your Vehicle

- Scan the road and shoulders ahead of you. Looking ahead helps provide enough reaction time if an animal is spotted. Also, remember some animals move in groups, so when there is one, there are usually more in the area.
- Do not panic. Depending on the species of animal you see in the road, this could be quite a startling situation. Remember that being prepared and thinking ahead will reduce the chances of you or the animal you encounter being injured.
- Use high-beam headlight if there's no oncoming traffic. Wildlife may be spotted sooner when using high beams. This will give the driver time to slow down, move over or honk the horn to scare the animal away. High beams also help in spotting some animals' reflective eyes.
- If you have time before the impact, lower down into your seat so that as much as your body as possible is shielded by the dashboard. Large animals like these often bust a vehicle's windshield. The lower you are positioned into your vehicle, the less likely you are to suffer serious injuries.
- If a collision is unavoidable, apply the brakes firmly and remain in your lane. Swerving to avoid an animal can often cause a more serious crash or result in drivers losing control of vehicles.
- After an impact with a large animal, try to regain control of your vehicle and pull off of the road in the first safe space. You and your vehicle may have suffered damage that requires assistance. Turn on your emergency flashers to warn other drivers of your accident. You may need to call 911.
- If you feel that you may have hit someone's pet, you may feel compelled to stop to check on the animal. Use caution when approaching any strange animal, especially one that may be injured. You can contact a local police station or animal control office for assistance in getting the animal the necessary medical attention and contacting its owner.
- Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk. Most animals, especially deer, tend to be more active early in the morning and at dusk.
- Slow down and use extra caution when traveling through areas with a high and active wildlife population. Be aware of increased wildlife movement in some regions during certain times of year, such as hunting or mating season.
- Drivers should always wear a seat belt and remain awake, alert and sober.
- Remember that all auto accidents involving animals are very common. Although it is natural to feel guilty for injuring or killing an animal in an impact, it is usually unavoidable without putting your own life in danger.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE RISK CONTROL DEPARTMENT:

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